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RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Austria, Canada, Denmark*, Finland, France, Germany, Greece*, Ireland*, Italy, Netherlands, Norway*, Spain*, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Sweden*: draft resolution

The plight of street children

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling its resolution 1993/81 of 10 March 1993 and General Assembly resolution 48/136 of 20 December 1993,

Welcoming the special attention given to the rights of children in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, in particular in part I, paragraph 21,

Recalling the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a major contribution to the protection of the rights of all children, including street children,

Reaffirming that children are a particularly vulnerable group in society whose rights require special protection, and that children living under especially difficult circumstances, such as street children, deserve special attention, protection and assistance from their families and communities and as part of national efforts and international cooperation,

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* In accordance with rule 69, paragraph 3, of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Recognizing that all children have the right to health, shelter and education, to an adequate standard of living and to freedom from violence and harassment,

Deeply concerned about the growing number of street children worldwide and the squalid conditions in which these children are often forced to live,

Profoundly concerned that the killing of and violence against street children threaten the most fundamental right of all, the right to life,

Alarmed at continuing serious offences of this nature against street children,

Recognizing the duty and responsibility of Governments to investigate all cases of offences against street children and to punish offenders,

Recognizing also that legislation per se is not enough to prevent violations of human rights, including those of street children, and that Governments should implement their laws and complement legislative measures with effective action, inter alia in the fields of law enforcement and in the administration of justice,

Welcoming the efforts made by some Governments to take effective action to address the question of street children,

Welcoming also the publicity given to and the increased awareness of the plight of street children, and the achievements of non-governmental organizations in promoting their rights and in providing practical assistance to improve their situation, and expressing its appreciation of their continued efforts,

Welcoming further the valuable work of the United Nations Children's Fund and its National Committees in reducing the suffering of street children,

Noting with appreciation the important work carried out in this field by the United Nations, in particular the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL),

Bearing in mind the diverse causes of the emergence and marginalization of street children, including poverty, rural-to-urban migration, unemployment, broken families, intolerance and exploitation, and that such causes are often aggravated and their solution made more difficult by serious socio-economic difficulties,

Bearing in mind that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action urged all States, with the support of international cooperation, to address the acute problem of children in especially difficult circumstances and that national and international mechanisms and programmes should be strengthened for the defence and protection of children, including street children,

Recognizing that the prevention and solution of certain aspects of this problem could be facilitated in the context of economic and social development,

1. Expresses grave concern at the continued growth in the number of incidents worldwide and at reports of street children being involved in and affected by serious crime, drug abuse, violence and prostitution;

2. Urges Governments to continue actively to seek comprehensive solutions to tackle the problems of street children and to take measures to restore their full participation in society, and to provide, inter alia, adequate nutrition, shelter, health care and education;

3. Strongly urges all Governments to respect fundamental human rights, particularly the right to life, and to take urgent measures to prevent the killing of street children and to combat torture and violence against street children;

4. Emphasizes that strict compliance with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is obligatory for States parties, would constitute a significant step towards solving the problems of street children, and calls upon all States that have not done so to become parties to the Convention as a matter of priority;

5. Calls on the international community to support, through effective international cooperation, the efforts of States to improve the situation of street children and encourages States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in preparing their reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, to bear this problem in mind and to consider requesting technical advice and assistance for initiatives aimed at improving the situation of street children, in accordance with article 45 of the Convention;

6. Commends the Committee on the Rights of the Child for the attention it pays in its monitoring activities to the situation of children who, to survive,

are forced to live and work in the streets, and reiterates its invitation to the Committee to consider the possibility of a general comment on street children;

7. Recommends that the Committee on the Rights of the Child and other relevant treaty monitoring bodies give attention to this growing problem when examining reports from States parties;

8. Invites Governments, United Nations bodies and organizations and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to cooperate with each other to ensure greater awareness and more effective action to solve the problem of street children by, among other measures, initiating and supporting development projects that can have a positive impact on the situation of street children;

9. Calls on special rapporteurs, special representatives and working groups of the Commission on Human Rights and of the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, within their mandates, to pay particular attention to the plight of street children;

10. Decides to consider the question further at its fifty-first session under the agenda item entitled "Rights of the Child".

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